

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-7 are pending herein. Claim 1 has been amended as supported by, for example, Fig. 1 of the present application. Claim 4 has been amended for clarification purposes only.

Examiner Kackar is thanked for courtesies extended to Applicants' representative (Steven Caldwell) during a telephonic interview on September 25, 2003. The substance of that interview has been incorporated into the following remarks.

1. Claims 1 and 7 were rejected under §102(b) over Aruga et al. During the above-mentioned telephonic interview, Examiner Kackar tentatively agreed that amended claim 1 submitted above overcomes this rejection. Particularly, it was agreed that Aruga does not disclose or suggest that an outer surface portion of a first wall portion (i.e., tubular main portion) is substantially parallel to an outer surface portion of a second wall portion (i.e., diameter extending portion), and wherein the first wall portion has a radial thickness that is less than the radial thickness of the second wall portion, as is now recited in pending claim 1.

During the interview, Examiner Kackar requested that Applicants clarify their position with respect to Fig. 4 of Chen (a secondary reference) when submitting a Response to the Office Action. Fig. 4 of Chen shows that shaft 158 includes inner and outer surfaces extending along the longitudinal axis of the shaft. As is illustrated in Chen's Fig. 4, the diameter of the shaft inner surface is larger at the top portion near susceptor 155 as compared to the diameter of the shaft inner surface near the central portion of shaft 158. Conversely, pending independent claim 1 has also been amended to clarify that the inner surface of the supporting member has a substantially constant diameter along the entire length of the supporting member." As such, Chen's disclosure that the shaft inner surface has varying diameters at different portions of the shaft does not disclose or suggest a supporting member inner surface having a substantially constant diameter, as now recited in pending claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that pending claim 1 defines patentable subject matter over Chen.

2. Claim 2 was rejected under §103(a) over Aruga et al. Applicants respectfully submit that the arguments submitted above distinguish claim 1 from Aruga. Since claim 2 depends directly from claim 1, claim 2 is also believed to be allowable over Aruga.

3. Claims 3-6 were rejected under §103(a) over Aruga et al. in view of Chen et al. Applicants respectfully submit that the arguments submitted above distinguish claim 1 from

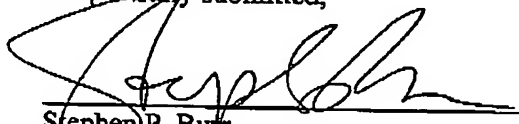
Aruga. Since Chen does not overcome the deficiencies of Aruga, and since claims 3-6 depend either directly or indirectly from claim 1, claims 3-6 are also believed to be allowable over the applied prior art of record.

Examiner Kackar is requested to confirm receipt and consideration of the IDS filed May 3, 2002 received in the U.S. PTO on May 10, 2002.

If Examiner Kackar believes that contact with Applicants' attorney would be advantageous toward the disposition of this case, he is herein requested to call Applicants' attorney at the phone number noted below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees associated with this communication or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-1446.

Respectfully submitted,


Stephen P. Burr
Reg. No. 32,970

September 30, 2003

Date

SPB:SWC:jms

BURR & BROWN
P.O. Box 7068
Syracuse, NY 13261-7068

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CENTRAL FAX CENTER
SEP 30 2003

Customer No.: 025191
Telephone: (315) 233-8300
Facsimile: (315) 233-8320

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